

**An Interview with Rob Ventura about his co-authored book with Brian Borgman *Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical & Balanced Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014, 124 pp., paperback.**

Interviewed by Brian G. Najapfour

Brother, congratulations on your new co-authored book which I enjoyed reading.

Here are some of my questions for you about your discourse:

**1. Given the numerous volumes written on the subject of spiritual warfare, what do you think is the unique contribution of your book to this subject?**

Dear brother, thank you for taking the time to read the book. I am glad you enjoyed it. Regarding your first question I would say that the unique contribution of this work is that it is a contemporary, concise, and scriptural treatment of this subject written by two Reformed authors. If you were to Google the stated topic you would find that there are dozens of books that treat this theme in a downright nutty way. However, what we have done is open up the central New Testament passage that addresses this issue (Ephesians 6:10-20) dealing with it historically, contextually, exegetically, and practically. As we have done this we have kept Christ our great champion central in all things since at the cross he defeated Satan, our great foe.

Brian, one reason why I am particularly excited about this new book is that it gives Christians from all different theological backgrounds a solid treatment of this subject in just 124 pages. Typically I would recommend to people who want to learn about this topic William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour* but due to the sheer size of that volume, unfortunately many do not make their way through it. However our book can be read in a just few hours and the reader would be able to get the gist of the matter and be helped to stand strong in this great fight of all fights.

**2. In Steven J. Lawson's foreword to your book, he mentions that the flesh, our old nature, is one of our enemies, because it is "opposed to God and can do nothing to please Him" (vii). Lawson's statement seems to imply that a believer in Christ has two natures: old & new. Does a believer have two natures: one that is opposed to God and one that is not?**

Concerning your question, and I believe Dr. Lawson would agree, regeneration is an act of God whereby He quickens a dead sinner and implants a new nature in the believer so that he or she is now a new creation in Christ Jesus our Lord (2 Cor. 5:17). The Christian does not have two natures per se so that there is a kind of Yin and Yang, Jekyll and Hyde dualism going on in them. No, rather the old man has been crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6). *Nonetheless* as Spurgeon rightly said; "though the old man was crucified he sure is a slow dying." To state the matter another way, although Paul says in Colossians 3:9, "you have put

off the old man with his deeds,” he could also say in Colossians 3:5 “put to death your members which are on the earth.” See also Ephesians 4:22-24.

- 3. Your book addresses Satan as our great foe in spiritual warfare. Is Satan present everywhere at the same time? If he is not, does it mean that he tempts us indirectly through his demons? Also, can Satan read all our thoughts and foretell what we are going to do?**

Satan is a great foe and according to the Apostle Peter he walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8b). We must never minimize this fact. We must be balanced in our perspective concerning our great opponent. However having said this, Satan is absolutely *not* omnipresent *nor* is he omnipotent as God alone is. Satan can tempt us through a variety of means, yes, even through his cohorts the demons and this is why it is vital that according to Paul we give no opportunity to him (Eph. 4:27).

Concerning our thought life, since Satan is not God he cannot read our minds or foretell what we are going to do. However we must never forget that the mind is a major battlefield in spiritual warfare and such passages as 2 Cor. 4:4; 10:1-6; and 11:3 highlight this truth. This being so, Paul calls us to “take up the helmet of salvation” for in doing this we will be greatly protected in this regard.

- 4. It is said that without Christ you cannot resist Satan. Does an unbeliever have the power to resist the Devil? Please answer this question in light of two men, one who is a Christian and one who is not. Both were tempted to commit adultery. The Christian husband yielded to the temptation, whereas the unbelieving husband did not.**

Without Christ we are the devil's spiritual property. He is our spiritual father (John 8:44), we walk according to his power (Eph. 2:2) and are part of his kingdom (Col. 1:13). When God makes us spiritually alive all of these things change — praise God for this! Because of our spiritual condition before we are converted we absolutely cannot resist the devil. However regarding the scenario you stated above, regardless of who did what, the devil is never to blame for our sin because he cannot make us sin. As Christians we sin because our hearts are not yet perfected and so in the case of the believer falling into adultery and the unbeliever not falling, it seems that the one had less self-control than the other (sadly).

- 5. What projects are you currently working on?**

I am currently editing a new book entitled *Going Beyond the Five Points: Perusing a More Comprehensive Reformation* that I am excited about. I am also hoping to start writing a new booklet with my co-elder Jack Buckley in a series entitled *Cultivating Biblical Godliness* for Reformation Heritage Books, the Lord willing.